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STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 306

SUBJECT: Remarks made by Ambassador Draper

1. General Observations. Ambassador Draper was generally optimistic regarding the outlook in Western Europe. Thus he believes that, despite recent setbacks, some form of EDC will be approved. He further believes that agreement can be reached by March or April on the 1952 Annual Review which will commit the NATO countries to firm force goals for 1953 and provisional goals for 1954.

2. The Standing Group is currently undertaking a general reassessment of NATO strategic concepts. This is scheduled to be completed by Summer 1953 and will form the basis for negotiations on the 1953 Annual Review, which will probably be held in September or October 1953. The strategic reassessment will involve an analysis of Soviet bloc strength and an analysis of NATO capabilities, including the effect of new weapons on military requirements.

3. The Ambassador commented that, during the period of the US Presidential campaign, the Western Europeans were fearful that the US might undertake actions resulting in greater East-West tension or that the US would lose interest in Western Europe. Following the elections, however, these fears subsided.

4. British Strategy. The British defense effort for FY 1954 (1 April 1953-31 March 1954) will be slightly larger than that of FY 1953, although far smaller than the effort which was earlier envisaged at Lisbon. In addition, the FY 1954 program puts greater concentration on new weapons, including aircraft which will not be operational before 1955. Britain's decision to cut back on Lisbon goals was due primarily to its financial difficulties, although the decision was made also in the light of a reassessment of the prospects of early war. Draper believes that this reassessment was an objective study rather than a deliberately slanted analysis designed to support a policy decision.

State Dept. review completed

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5. French View of World Situation. According to Mr. Draper, key French officials believe that the risk of war is no lower than it was earlier thought to be. The Ambassador believes that this view is genuinely held and is not advanced in order to justify high French force goals and a correspondingly high level of US aid to France.

6. Problem of German Support Costs. The Ambassador agreed that the British were unable to finance from their own resources the costs of maintaining UK troops in Germany and that the Germans will be most reluctant to meet these costs once their own military build-up begins. He said we could not afford merely to substitute German for British divisions, and that some means will have to be found which will enable the British to maintain the bulk of their forces in Germany.

7. Third-Force Sentiment. The Ambassador doubts that Western Europe can develop sufficient strength to occupy a middle position between the US and the USSR and believes that key officials in Western Europe believe that a close association with the US is necessary for the indefinite future.

8. French Position in Indochina. The Ambassador believes that while the French still feel they must eventually somehow be relieved of their present burden in Indochina, they are probably no closer to a decision to withdraw than they were six months ago. He believes that the prestige factor is of overriding importance and that the French realize that their position in the Far East, the Near East and in Africa would be fatally weakened in the event they were to withdraw from Indochina.

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